

Opening Address Senate President Pro Tem Edward Quick

January 3, 2001

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests, Lt. Governor Maxwell, Judge, friends and family,

It is once again my privilege and pleasure to address the Missouri Senate as we open a new year and new session of the Missouri General Assembly. Let me first introduce my special guests:

My wife Jane

My son Mark, my granddaughter Morgan and her mother Michelle

My daughter Rebecca, my grandson Nathan, granddaughter Marley and grandson Ethan, and

My son Randy and granddaughters Jessica and Amanda.

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It gives me great pleasure to welcome back my old friends and colleagues...and to be joined by our new colleagues...Senator John Loudon, Senator Michael Gibbons, Senator Chuck Gross and Senator Bill Foster...I know how special this day is for you.

I want to personally congratulate you...and ask my fellow Senators and everyone in the gallery to rise and join me in welcoming these four new members to the Missouri Senate. The trust and responsibility your constituents have placed on you is tremendous. I know I speak for all of us here in welcoming you and offering to help in every possible way in your efforts to serve the citizens that you-and all of us-represent here.

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Two days before Christmas, as most of you know, my house caught fire. Although there are many interesting things that go through your mind when your house is burning....what I found to be the most interesting is what you save when you only have a few minutes. What are the things important enough for you to pick up, while other things, far more valuable, you leave behind. It's not always the monetary things that you find are close to your heart, it many times is something that has no monetary value at all. As I was thinking about what I was going to say today, I realized that in the Missouri Senate I find myself in the same situation. The things that are close to my heart have no monetary value for me but are extremely important to the citizens of the state. I think we all need to remember during this upcoming session that the issues we work on and fight for need to be the treasures that are close to our hearts and those that we are the most proud of.

These next four years will be my last opportunity to serve in the Missouri Senate (some will be very glad to see this happen). However, this means that in the next four years, I must accomplish as many things as possible in order to guarantee for my children, my grandchildren and all the citizens of Missouri a better life with more opportunities. All of those who know me, know how truly proud and fortunate I feel to serve in the Missouri State Senate. The responsibility to represent 155,000 people is awesome! For this reason, it is so important to me for all the Senators sitting here, old and new, democrats and republicans, to receive the highest grade in "playing and working well with others."

The thing that I have always found incredible is the fact that the Missouri Senate is one of only two chambers in the nation that is not divided by an aisle. In our Chamber, Democrats and Republicans sit side by side. When a Senator rises to speak, a person in the gallery never knows whether they are a democrat or a republican.

November brought one of the closest and most unusual election cycles in the history of our nation and in the history of this state. News reporters, political analysts and historians will spend a tremendous amount of time studying this election and trying to figure out what it all means.

I'm neither a reporter, nor a historian. But as a lawmaker, I want to listen very closely to what the people have said. I believe the election tells us a great deal about those we serve and how they wish to be served.

What can we determine by the closeness of the recent election? That in almost everything we do we will make half the people happy and half the people angry....

But what it really tells me is that the people of Missouri are not only looking for us to work together on behalf of them, but expecting us to work together to solve our upcoming tight budget issues, our transportation problems, our waste in government, our need for healthcare and education improvements among others. Let's not let their vote and message fall on deaf ears.

Because of the closeness and possible even split between Democrats and Republicans, other states will check on us to see how we handle this situation. Let's be sure we do not embarrass ourselves and our state. We are the Show Me State. Let's show ourselves that we can rise to the occasion and make ourselves proud!

Thank you